



Athlete Profile (National)

Scot Severn – Sports after Being Struck By Lightning

While attending annual training at Camp Grayling, Michigan in 1989, Scot Severn, an Army Reserve veteran from the small town of Caro, Michigan, was struck by lightning as an evening storm moved through the military base. Changing his life forever, Severn woke up a quadriplegic after being struck by the sudden bolt. The direct hit threw him 40 feet, causing both external and internal burns that damaged his nervous system. The lightning that evening could not strike down Severn's will to live or diminish his competitive spirit, though. He started bowling from his wheelchair shortly after the accident, and later moved on to more athletic competition. In 2004, he first attended the National Veterans Wheelchair Games, and has collected an array of medals at the event ever since.



When asked why this returning competitor comes back to the Games each year, Severn says without hesitation, "It's the people. There are a lot of us, like me, in this small world who want to compete in sports." "That's why attending the National Veterans Wheelchair Games are so special for me. The Games allow me and my fellow comrades to compete in sports. Plus, I have gained so many friendships through this experience."

Severn, who is now 38, serves as sports director for the Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) and also sits on the state PVA chapter's board of directors. He has also partnered with the Department of Natural Resources in Michigan on issues pertaining to making state parks more accessible for persons with disabilities.

As the father of three children, Severn and his wife, Brenda, keep busy with activities and road trips with his local quad rugby wheelchair team – the Michigan Storm. "Our quad rugby team recently competed nationally, placing fourth in Division 2. Our team was also inducted into the Michigan Athletes with Disabilities Hall of Fame as Athletes of the Year for 2006. In 2005, I had been inducted as Male Athlete of the Year," Severn says with pride. "I believe that wheelchair sports serve to make me a better person and fill a void left by a lightning bolt more than 17 years ago."

Severn served in the Army from 1985-89 and is a graduate of Saginaw Valley State University. He receives care at the VA medical facility in Saginaw, Michigan. At the 2007 National Veterans Wheelchair Games in Milwaukee this June, he plans to compete in swimming, air guns, softball, bowling, and in his favorite sport – quad rugby. He's known on the courts as a tough competitor and a player the others are always happy to have on their team. Because when he's not, he is also the one to be reckoned with.